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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/25/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EAID](#) [OPRC](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [GR](#)  
SUBJECT: GREEK VIEWS ON ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN ISSUES

REF: A. SECSTATE 6152  
[1](#)B. 07 ATHENS 2336

Classified By: DCM THOMAS COUNTRYMAN. REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (U) This message contains an action request for Department. See paragraph 4.

[1](#)2. (C) DepPolCouns and PolOff discussed ref a points on Israeli-Palestinian issues with MFA A6 Middle East Directorate deputy head Giorgos Ayfantis. On the demarche overall, Ayfantis complemented the author for a well-written paper, which he characterized as an accurate assessment of the situation. Indeed, Ayfantis said he intended to use the points in his discussions with EU colleagues. In terms of his substantive response, Ayfantis discussed three topics: assisting Israel with the problem of Gaza, release of Marwan Barghouti to serve as an alternative Palestinian leader to Hamas, and the problem of settlements.

GAZA

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[1](#)3. (C) Ayfantis said Greek FM Bakoyannis was very concerned about the situation in Gaza, noting that "Israel could not ignore provocations and should not have to deal with the situation alone." He said Bakoyannis was urging other EU members to take action to help relieve the 3 would help convince Is inattentive or passiv@ssions just after AnnapQmentioned again the propoQdping force for Gaza, w`ber-states were now coore going further, hyannis would like to discuss the idea with Israel. NOTE: After the Ayfantis meeting, Israeli DCM Mustaki called DepPolCouns and said Ayfantis had told him about our discussion on the EU PKO for Gaza. Mustaki said this was an interesting idea but that it had some problems, and he asked what our response to the Greeks had been. DepPolCouns answered that he had not responded to Ayfantis positively or negatively. END NOTE.

[1](#)4. (C) ACTION REQUEST: Embassy requests Department guidance on U.S. views regarding an EU peacekeeping force for Gaza.

BARGHOUTI

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[1](#)5. (C) Ayfantis said Greece was also concerned about leadership in Gaza. Abbas had "zero credibility" in Gaza and that was why Palestinians there supported Hamas. Ayfantis said Greece favored the release from Israeli prison of Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti, who was "not a fanatic" and "popular" in Gaza and thus could play a constructive role in the peace process negotiations. Right now, Ayfantis argued, Hamas was the only real authority in Gaza and alternatives were desperately needed.

## SETTLEMENTS

16. (C) On the hot-button issue of settlements, Ayfantis said the EU believed strongly that there could be no peace without resolution of the settlement issue. There were, he argued, already two inter-dependent states de facto existing side-by-side. The need now was to link them further through creation of mutual infrastructure -- much as France and Germany created various interlocking structures following WW II. As Israel and a Palestinian state became increasingly intertwined, Ayfantis argued, the issue of settlements would become less and less important. Ayfantis said other EU states shared this view and that Greece encouraged them to take active steps to put this idea into practice.

## COMMENT

17. (C) As we noted just after Annapolis, Greece -- and particularly FM Bakoyannis -- wants to play an active role in the Peace Process. Whether this is motivated by a Greek desire to assuage the U.S. as we grapple with the difficult issue of Macedonia's NATO invitation or Bakoyannis's personal interest in a legacy issue over-against Prime Minister and political rival Karamanlis, Greek activity on the Peace Process offers opportunities for cooperation. Greece has often been perceived as being pro-Palestinian in its orientation. Engaging Greece as a participant in some role might be useful.

SPECKHARD